

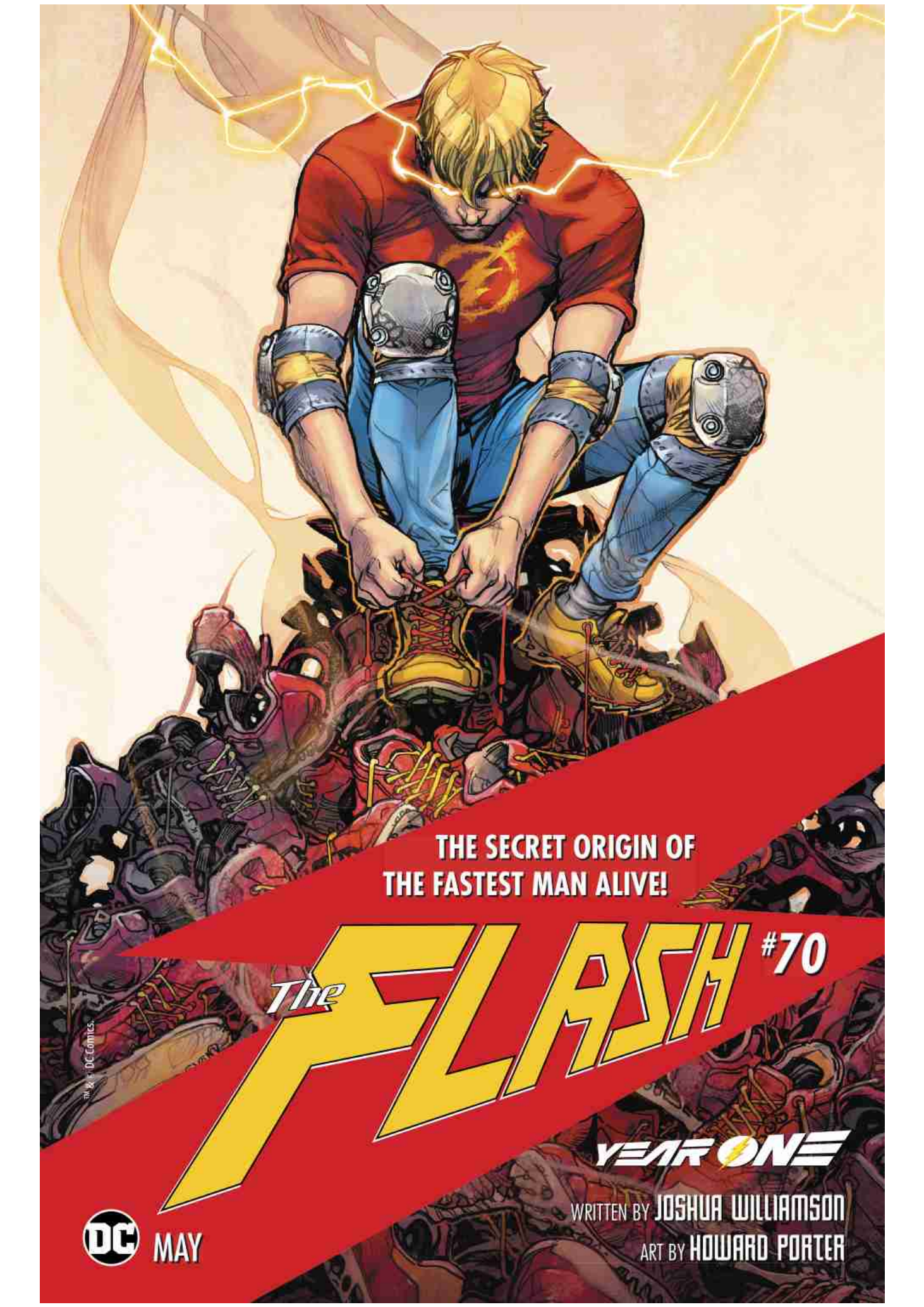
DC
UNIVERSE

5 | RATED T+ TEEN PLUS
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**7-ISSUE
MINI-SERIES**

**SNYDER
JOCK
BARON**



The Flash, wearing his iconic red suit with a yellow lightning bolt on the chest and blue pants, is shown from the waist down, crouching on a pile of wreckage. He is focused on tying his yellow and red high-top boots. The wreckage consists of various pieces of armor and debris, including a purple and red helmeted head. In the background, there are stylized yellow lightning bolts against a light orange and yellow sky. A large red diagonal band cuts across the lower half of the image, serving as a background for the title and other text.

THE SECRET ORIGIN OF
THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE!

The **FLASH** #70

YEAR ONE

WRITTEN BY JOSHUA WILLIAMSON

ART BY HOWARD PORTER



MAY

I'm not quite
ready
lately.

(Shhhhh.)

When I've felt off in the
past...I always came
back to the same thing:
the city itself.

I think of my first
riding the subway. Waiting
for the train to come,
standing on the plat-
form with my father, excited.

He smiles at me.
Hands me a token. It's
brass with a map of
Gotham in its earliest
days printed on the
front. I stare at it.

"Right now, k...do,"
he says, "you're
holding everything
this city stands for
in your hand."

When I ask
what he means,
he says that
in most cities,
public transit
costs more the
farther you
travel from the
city center.
So people of
means live at
the edges...
the poorest
at the heart.

But Gotham was
founded on the idea
that everyone is
equal, all rides
cost the same from
Swamp
to Wayne Tower.

"The one means a
single fare for all,"
he says. "The ring
means we protect
each other. The light
in the sky means we
strive to be better.
It's all right there,
..."

I am
mesmerized.

The train comes
and I don't want
to put the token
in the slot. Ever.

I see the token
now, in my mind,
and I...I am
myself again.

I am Gotham.
Because Gotham
is Batman. They
are one idea.

The idea that
together...

THE BATMAN WHO LAUGHS

PART 5

SCOTT SNYDER Writer

JOCK Artist

DAVID BARON Colors

SAL CIPRIANO Letters

JOCK Cover

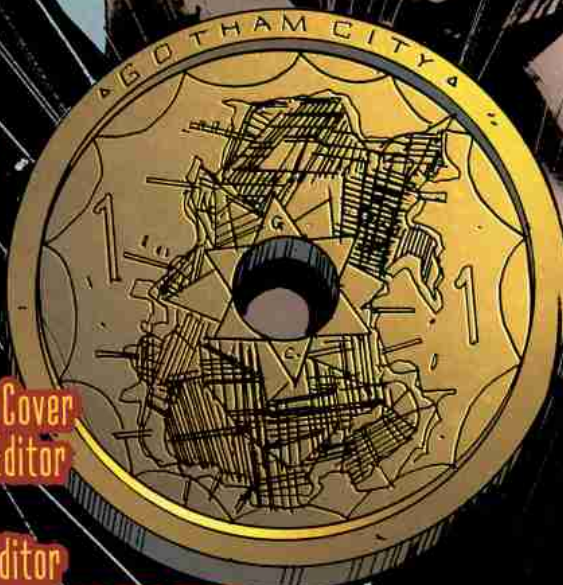
JENNY FRISON Variant Cover

DAVE WIELGOSZ Asst. Editor

KATIE KUBERT Editor

JAMIE S. RICH Group Editor

BATMAN Created by BOB KANE with BILL FINGER



BLACKGATE PRISON. NOW.

...we bring
out the very
best in
each other.

KILL THAT
@#%!

STAND DOWN! I'M THE
REAL BATMAN, DAMMIT!
HE'S THE BATMAN WHO
LAUGHS! RIGHT
THERE!

DON'T
LISTEN TO HIM!
HE'S TRYING
TO TRICK
YOU! KEEP
FIRING!

FUN
BEING ME,
EH, BRUCE?

I'D GET
USED TO IT IF
I WERE YOU...
HEH...

BYE-BYE
NOW.

NO!

POOM

OFFICERS! HIS
CAPE IS KEVLAR!
BRING IN THE A.P.S
OR JUST AIM FOR
HIS MOUTH.

YES,
SIR!

NO! HE'S
GETTING AWAY!
LISTEN TO ME! I
KNOW ALL OF
YOU! WE'VE
WORKED
TOGETHER!

YOU'RE OFFICER
LAURIE LENNER, AND
YOU'RE OFFICER DAVID
JIMENEZ!

BLAM BLAM BLAM

Why aren't they
listening?!

SOUNDS LIKE
BATMAN... NO...
BLOCK IT
OUT!
KILL
HIM... TO BE
SAFE!

NOT
WORTH THE
RISK...

...FAME
EITHER
WAY...

STOP IT!
STOP FIRING!
THIS ISN'T
YOU!

It is them,
...

No.
It's not.

You need
to ~~get away~~
of here!

Go, ~~batman~~,
go!

EVERYONE!
AFTER HIM! BRING
UP THE ARMOR
PIERCERS! WHERE
ARE THE--

MR. WAYNE!
BRUCE!

Dead. Head practically
severed...he was
dead...though...

...wearing an
armored vest.
Get it off him
before the
A.P.S--

COMING NOW,
MA'AM!

A.P.S ARE
HERE!

BRING THEM
UP FRONT!

AIM
FOR THE
MOUTH...

THE
MOUTH...

MOUTH...

BUDDA BUDDA

THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK

No time! Just
use him!

Between his
vest and your
armor you
should
be--AGHH!

Every bullet
like a knife...

The pain...
Move! Get
to the hatch
before more
of them...

...oh no...

More in front...
cutting you off!

THERE
HE IS!

MOUTH.

MOUTH.

They'll never
let you out!
They'll call in
the A.V.s,
the boats...
because they
think you're
him!

That you'd...

...so show them!
them who
really are!

And before I know
it, I'm yelling!

Yelling at them
Screaming...

...and they finally
hear me! They
and...

...suddenly
they stop.

WHAT...
WHAT
DID YOU
SAY?

I ~~SAID~~ HOW'S
YOUR FATHER, OFFICER
JIMENEZ? BUS ROUTE
FIFTEEN...GETS A LITTLE
DANGEROUS AT
NIGHT, EH?

AND YOU, OFFICER
LENNER...FIRE ESCAPE
OUTSIDE YOUR BEDROOM
WINDOW STILL MAKE YOU
NERVOUS...? I SEE
YOU CHECKING IT IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE
NIGHT...HEH.

HE
KNOWS...?

HE
KNOWS
MY...

BUT HE
DOESN'T
KNOW
WHERE I
LIV--

OFFICER PINE? FIVE
ELMORE LANE. OFFICER
GANTZ? ONE NARROWS
HEIGHTS! I KNOW
EVERYTHING ABOUT
ALL OF YOU!

NOW I'M
GOING TO WALK OUT
OF THIS PLACE, AND IF
YOU EVEN *THINK* OF
CALLING THE BOATS,
OR THE CHOPPERS...
I WILL *COME*
FOR YOU.

...MAYBE TONIGHT,
MAYBE TOMORROW, MAYBE A
YEAR FROM NOW, BUT I WILL
COME...FOR YOU AND EVERYONE
YOU LOVE AND I WILL MAKE WHAT
HAPPENED TO THIS BRUCE WAYNE
HERE LOOK LIKE A DAMNED
MERCY.



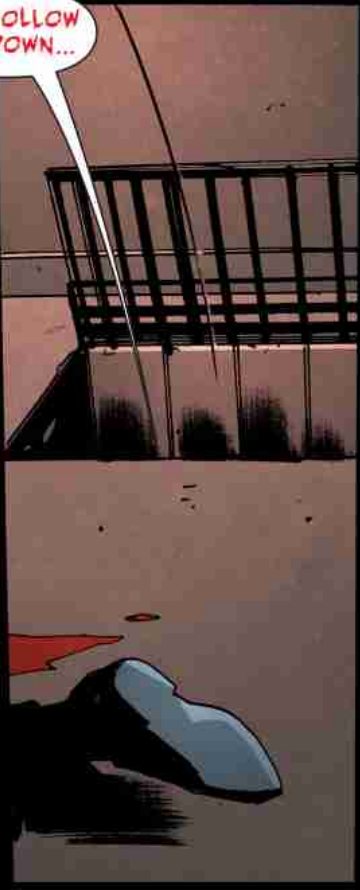
...WHY?!



BECAUSE
I'M THE
#*%&*%
BATMAN WHO
LAUGHS!
HAHAHA!



SO FOLLOW
ME DOWN...



1. LARRY
MURPHY

CROW
CROW!

STOP! PLEASE!
AAGH!

THUNK

CROW
CRO--

BAR.

YOU
RECOGNIZE
THEM, JIM? THE
BATMAN WHO
LAUGHS MADE
THEM *SPECIAL*
FOR ME.

THEY'RE ALL
VERSIONS OF
YOUR SON...
JAMES.

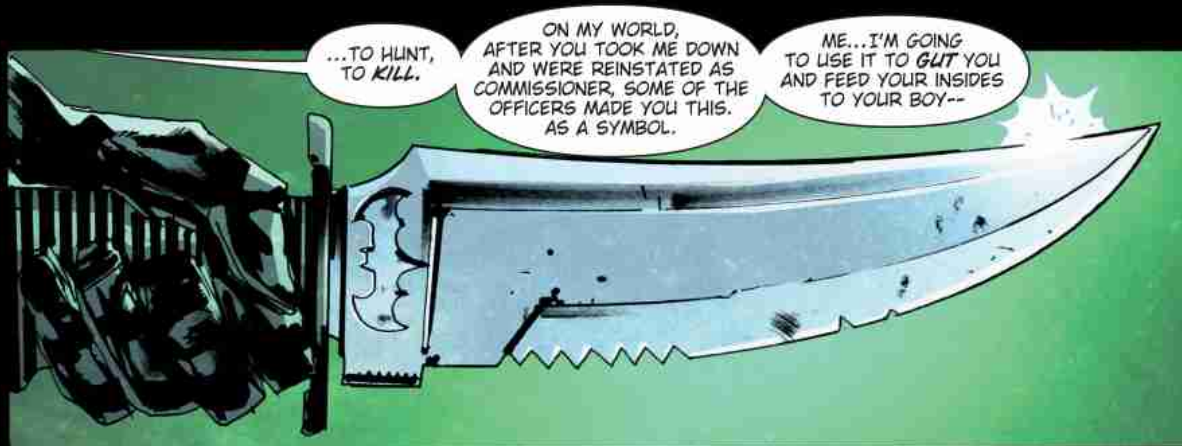
LOOK AT
THEM. REALLY
LOOK.

USUALLY, IT
TAKES A WHILE
FOR SOMEONE TO
BECOME A ROBIN.
BUT YOUR BOY... IT
WAS ALMOST LIKE
HE WANTED IT.

LIKE IT'S
ALL HE *EVER*
WANTED...

WHAT ARE
YOU--?

NO, THEY
CAN'T BE...





DAAADD...

JAMES,
PLEASE!
JAMES!

SCREEEE--

BLAM

BLAM

JAMES...
NO...I...

HEY.



THEY'RE NOT ME.

I'M RIGHT HERE.



I DID.

BUT BEING DOWN HERE...

"...THE PAST FEELS
MORE REAL THAN IT
HAS IN A WHILE."

STEP
INTO THE
LIGHT.

GO ON,
NOW. LET'S
HAVE A LOOK
AT YOU.

TA-DA.

WHY HAVE
YOU COME
HERE?

I'M HERE
BECAUSE...WELL,
THE TRUTH IS, I
NEED SOMETHING
FROM YOU. A
SMALL FAVOR.

THEY CALL
ME THE--

OH WE
RECOGNIZE YOU,
DEMON. AND WE
WILL JUDGE YOUR
REQUEST AGAINST
ALL WE KNOW
OF YOU.

HEH.
THANK YOU,
TRULY. I STAND
A HUMBLE MAN
BEFORE YOU.
HONORED JUST
TO BE
HEARD...



...BY THE
LEGENDARY
COURT OF
OWLS.

HA. THE FLATTERY
FROM THIS GHOUL. WHY
HEAR HIM OUT AT ALL?
LET'S TEST OUT THE NEW
CHAMBERS ON HIM INSTEAD.
THE HERETICS PERCH?
THE HOODED
HOLLOW?

NO, THE
RED CLUTCH! IT'LL
TAKE YEARS FOR HIM
TO EXPIRE IF WE
CAUTERIZE HIS
STUMPS...



IT IS
TRADITION
THAT WE LET
THE LITTLEST
ONE DECIDE.

YES!

YES,
THE LITTLE
ONE SHOULD
CHOOSE! HEAR
HIM OUT OR
NOT?



I WILL
DECIDE
THEN.

HELLO.

HELLO,
LITTLE ONE.

WHY
SHOULD WE
HEAR YOU OUT,
CREATURE?



WELL, BECAUSE I
WANT THE SAME THING
THAT YOU DO. TO SEE
THIS CITY BECOME
WHAT IT WAS MEANT
TO BECOME. TO SEE
ITS MOST ANCIENT
PLANS REALIZED.

I ASK JUST A
SMALL FAVOR OF
YOU TO HELP MY
PLAN ALONG. SO
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
IT'LL BE A HOOT.
PROMISE.



I SAY...

...NO.

THE TALONS
WILL TAKE YOUR
HEAD NOW. I'D LIKE
TO MAKE IT A LAMP.
A NIGHT LIGHT
FOR MY ROOM.



THE
TALONS!

ALL RIGHT
THEN, THEY
ARE CALLED!
HIS HEAD GOES
TO THE
YOUNGLING.

THE REST,
WE WILL DECIDE
LATER.



GREAT COURT, NO!
I BESEECH YOU...YOU
HAVEN'T EVEN HEARD MY
CASE. I ASK SOMETHING
VERY SMALL FROM YOU!
PLEASE! PLEA--

ENOUGH!
WE ONLY HUMORED
YOUR CASE FOR OUR
AMUSEMENT.

NOW YOU
CAN TAKE YOUR
REQUEST UP WITH
THE TALONS,
BEAST!

HEH! SEE,
THAT'S THE
THING...





...I TOOK
YOU OVER AND
BECAME YOUR
LEADER.

Blip

WHAT IN... WHO
ARE YOU?!

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
MY--

YOUR BIRDIES,
BRUCE? YOUR
WHOLE WORLD!
ALL GONE.
YOU'RE HERE
WITH ME
NOW.

RAH!

THAT'S THE
SPIRIT!

HANANA!

WHO ARE
YOU?!

I SAID
WHO ARE
YOU?!

I don't
recognize
myself
anymore...

So again I go back to the beginning. To the city.

Look at it.

See it for what it is, what it always has been, always will be. It's Batman. Batman is Gotham.

And Gotham is about people being better, together...

...ing
gether...?

No. ~~it~~ it!

Focus. See deeper, dammit! To the bedrock. The #% mica schist it's all built on. The idea. The blueprin--

BATMAN!
BATMAN COME IN! I
HAVE HIM, I HAVE DAD!
BUT WE'RE TRAPPED
IN THE SEWER...
WE NEED--

GOOD WORK,
JAMES! STAY
WHERE YOU ARE!
I'M SENDING A
VEHICLE
NOW!

SIMPLE...

THE GRIM
KNIGHT, HE'S
BOOBY-TRAPPING
THE ROUTES! TO GET
US OUT AT THIS POINT
YOU'D NEED A BOAT, A
PLANE, MAYBE A DAMN
TANK...WHAT KIND OF
VEHICLE COULD YOU
POSSIBLY SEND
THAT WOULD--

"...A BAT
ONE."

ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?

WE'RE FINE,
BUT DAD SAW
WHAT HE'S
PLANNING. WE
HAVE TO ACT
FAST.

I WAS IN HIS LAIR,
BATMAN, AND THE STUFF HE'S
MAKING... THIS **SERUM**... YOU
WERE RIGHT. IT CHANGES PEOPLE
INTO THEIR WORST SELVES,
CELL BY CELL...

HE HAS
FOUR OF THE SIX
CONTAINERS HE
NEEDS OF THE
STUFF.

WITH YOU
HERE WE CAN STOP
HIM. WE CAN **GET** IT
OFF AND PROTECT
THE CITY.

OUR ONLY
ADVANTAGE IS THAT
WE CAME AFTER HIM
BEFORE HE WAS **READY**,
BEFORE HE HACKED
LAST LAUGH.

HERE, THOUGH...
WE NEED TO DO IT
TOGETHER. WITHIN TWO
MINUTES OF EACH OTHER
OR IT'LL **SHUT DOWN** FOR
SEVEN DAYS FOR **SAFETY**
AND BE INOPERABLE.

WHAT
WILL IT DO,
EXACTLY?

EFFECTIVE
IMMEDIATELY, IT WILL
DISMANTLE GOTHAM'S
ENTRY POINTS, DISCONNECT
IT FROM THE NATIONAL
GRID, OUTSIDE WATER,
RESOURCES.

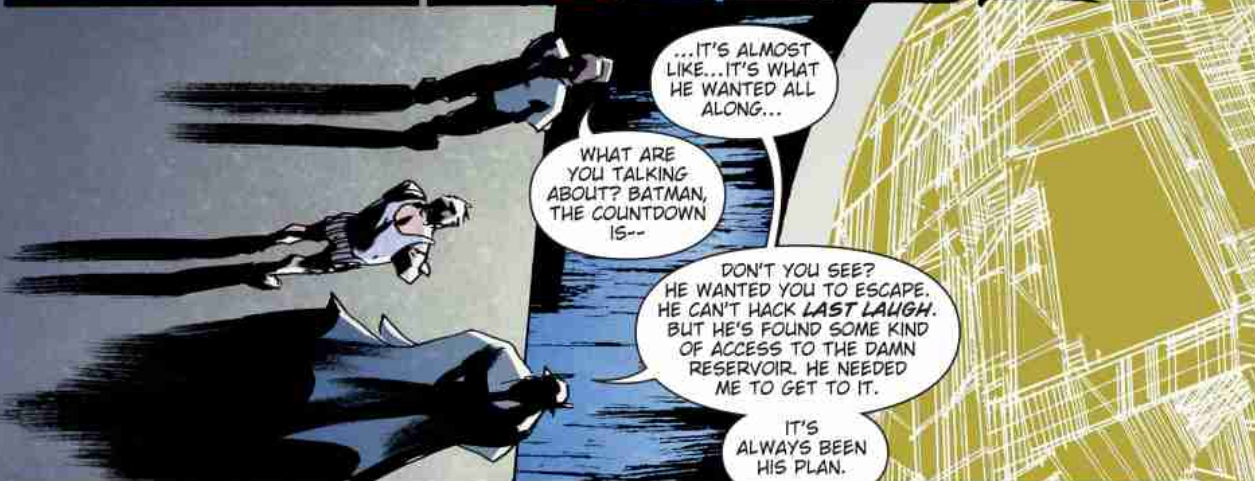
BOTTOM LINE,
LAST LAUGH WILL TURN
GOTHAM INTO A QUARANTINE
ZONE AND **ELIMINATE** ANY
CHANCE OF THE **BATMAN**
WHO LAUGHS INFECTING
THE WATER SUPPLY.

IT'LL ALSO
GIVE US A
THOUSAND WAYS
OF CATCHING HIM.
HERE, JUST PUT
YOUR HAND--

BATMAN,
WAIT. BEFORE
WE DO THIS... I...
I WANT TO SAY
SOMETHING...

WHAT
IS IT?







HELLO, BATMAN.
FORGIVE THE
INTRUSION, BUT I
REALLY NEED TO SHOW
YOU SOMETHING.



ENOUGH! I
FIGURED OUT YOUR
DAMNED PLAN! I
WON'T LET
YOU WIN!

YOU WON'T MAKE
GOTHAM INTO SOME **MONSTER!**
SO SHOW ME WHATEVER DEAD
BRUCE WAYNE YOU--

OH, THAT'S NOT
WHAT I WANTED TO
SHOW YOU....



THIS
IS.
AS YOU
KNOW, THE
OWLS KEEP
THESE **MAPS**
IN THEIR MAZE.
THIS IS THE
OLDEST. FROM
1699, BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES,
BEFORE THE NEW
RULES. I WANT
YOU TO LOOK AT
IT AND LEARN.
WHAT GOTHAM
REALLY IS.

I KNOW
GOTHAM
BETTER THAN
YOU EVER--



YOU KNOW
NOTHING!



FOR ALL YOUR
HATRED OF ME... I
AM YOUR FRIEND.
BATMAN. I'M THE
BEST **WOLF** FRIEND
YOU'LL EVER
HAVE.

SHUT
UP!

NO! BECAUSE
ALL I'M TRYING TO DO IS
MAKE YOU SEE WHAT YOU
COULD BE... WHAT THIS CITY
COULD BE... WHAT IT **HAS**
ALWAYS WANTED
TO BE...

DAMMIT,
DON'T LISTEN TO
HIM. BATMAN! SHUT
THE MESSAGE
OFF NOW!



LOOK AT IT!
YOU THINK THE CITY WAS
DESIGNED TO BE SOME
BEACON, A HAVEN. BUT
WHAT THIS FIRST MAP
SHOWS...

...IS THAT GOTHAM
CITY--AND LAST
LAUGH--WAS BUILT
FOR THE EXACT
OPPOSITE.



SEE, LAST LAUGH WAS
CREATED SO THAT GOTHAM
COULD BECOME A SEAT OF
POWER, A FORTRESS CITY
WHERE A NEW, STRONGER
MAN WOULD BE
INCUBATED.

...THE FINAL
TRUTH...

NOT JUST
ARMS, BUT DISEASES TO
SPREAD. POTTER'S FIELD, A
SECRET SUPPLY FOR
PESTILENCE, AWAY FROM
PRYING EYES...



THE RING
MARKED HIDDEN
MOORINGS FOR SHIPS
TO DEFEND FROM. THE
STAR MARKED AN
ARMORY BENEATH
CITY HALL.

0 1:00

YOUR FRIENDS
WILL LIE TO YOU, TELL
YOU I'M WRONG, BUT
YOU KNOW...

YOU SEE THEM
FOR WHO THEY
ARE. WEAK, PETTY.
JUST AS GOTHAM
HAS BECOME.



BATMAN!
BATMAN!



THAT'S
THE SECRET I'VE
BEEN WAITING TO
TELL YOU ALL THIS
TIME...

...THE POINT OF
GOTHAM WAS TO
CONQUER! THE
LAST LAUGH WAS A
STRATEGY, A
DESTINY...



"YES,
BROTHER!
YES!"

"REMEMBER
IT..."

KLIK

"REMEMBER THAT
SUBWAY TOKEN IN
OUR HAND. THAT
MORNING BACK
WHEN WE WERE
YOUNG."

BEEP

"REMEMBER FATHER SMILING. 'RIGHT
NOW, KIDDO,' HE SAID. 'YOU'RE
HOLDING EVERYTHING THIS CITY
STANDS FOR IN YOUR HAND!'"

"AND HE WAS RIGHT.
IT WAS ALL THERE.
THE TRUE MEANING."

"YOU JUST DIDN'T
SEE IT THEN."

"BUT NOW
YOU DO!"

RMMMBLE



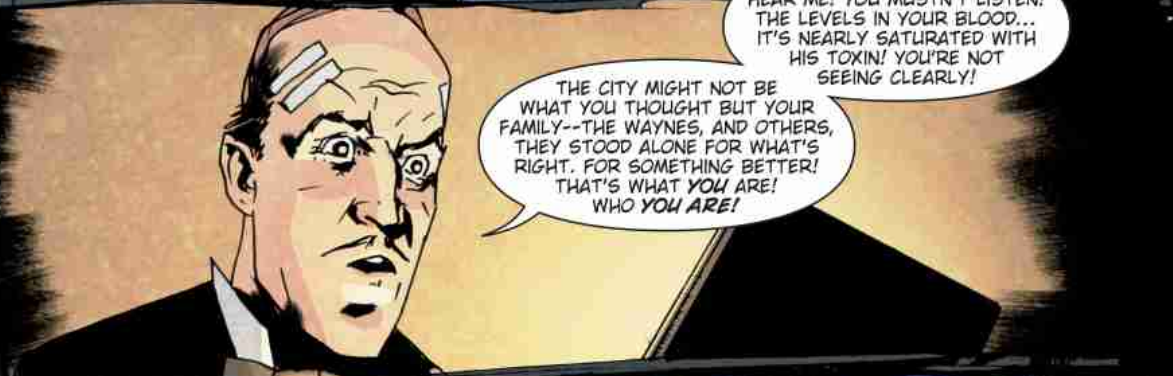
YOU SEE IT FOR WHAT IT ALWAYS WAS, AND WHAT IT CAN BE NOW. NOT A BEACON. NOT A LIGHT. A DARKNESS. AN OPEN MOUTH WITH SHARP TEETH. A NEW KIND OF CITY...

00:20

...A CITY OF PEOPLE WHO LAUGH LAST LIKE ME. LIKE YOU...



SIR, STOP! PLEASE! HEAR ME! YOU MUSTN'T LISTEN! THE LEVELS IN YOUR BLOOD... IT'S NEARLY SATURATED WITH HIS TOXIN! YOU'RE NOT SEEING CLEARLY!



THE CITY MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOU THOUGHT BUT YOUR FAMILY--THE WAYNES, AND OTHERS, THEY STOOD ALONE FOR WHAT'S RIGHT. FOR SOMETHING BETTER! THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE! WHO YOU ARE!



AND... IT HASN'T WORKED.

00:10



YES! DO IT!
FOR ONCE IN YOUR
LIFE BE A REAL BATMAN.
BE A SYMBOL OF WHAT
THIS CITY REALLY IS, AND
HELP IT FULFILL ITS
DESTINY.

HELP IT BE
THE BEST VERSION OF
ITSELF POSSIBLE. HELP
EVERYONE IN IT BE WHO
THEY REALLY WANT TO
BE. WHO THEY'RE
MEANT TO BE...

NO! SIR,
PLEA-- **MUTE.**

00:05

HAHA! YES!
GO ON, BROTHER. SEE
IT AS IT CAN BE! AS IT
SHOULD BE! I KNOW
YOU CAN! SEE IT AS
I SEE IT...

00:03

"THROUGH
NEW EYES."

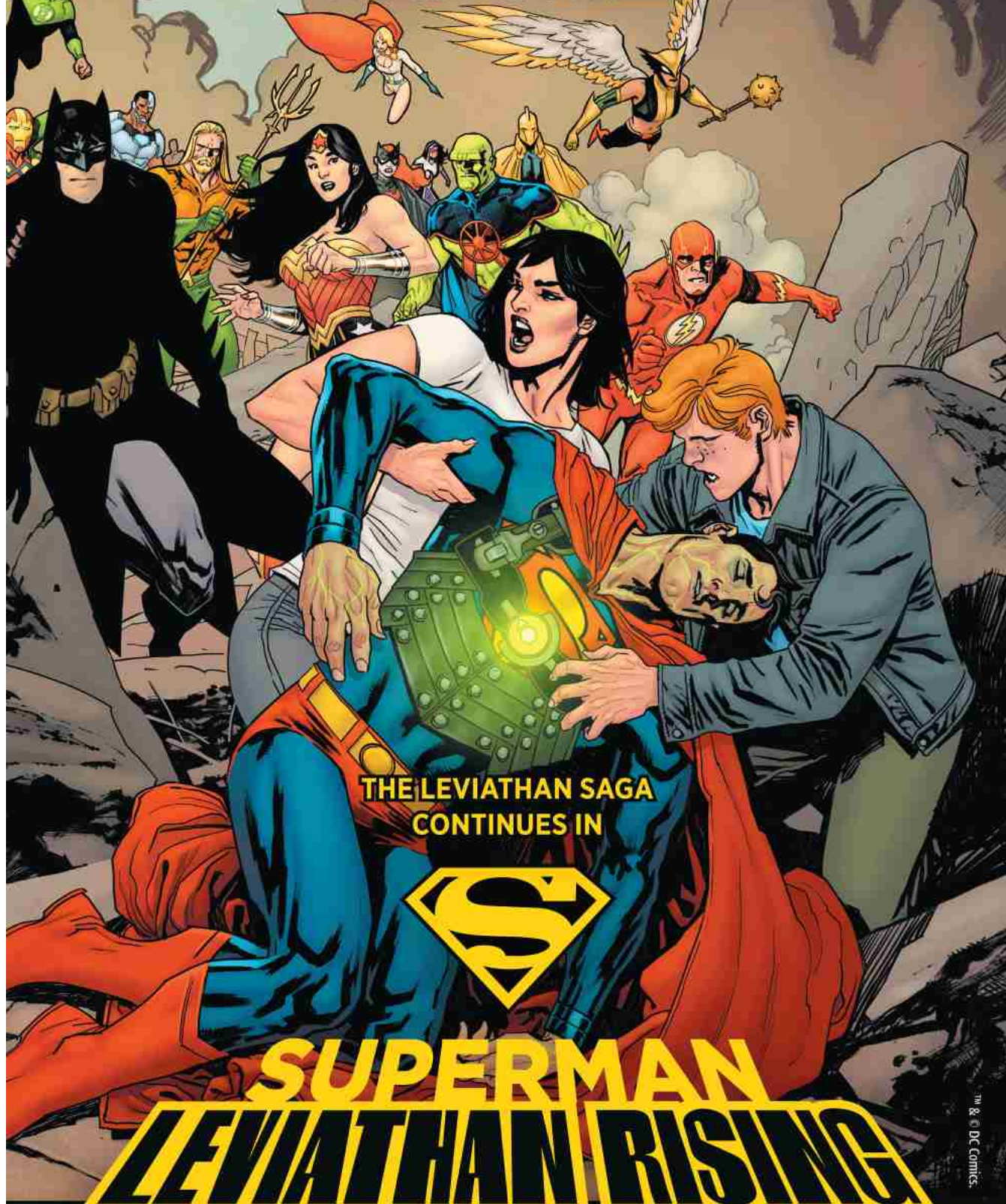
00:02

00:01

**LAST
LAUGH...
ACTIVATED.**

TO BE CONTINUED...

**NO ONE CAN STOP LEVIATHAN.
NO ONE.**



**THE LEVIATHAN SAGA
CONTINUES IN**



SUPERMAN LEVIATHAN RISING

AN 80-PAGE OVERSIZE SPECIAL



WRITTEN BY **BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS**

MATT FRACTION • GREG RUCKA • MARC ANDREYKO

ART BY **YANICK PAQUETTE • STEVE LIEBER • MIKE PERKINS**

MAY

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EVENT LEVIATHAN

A **DC NATION** INTERVIEW WITH WRITER BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS

What can you tell us about the story?

In the pages of ACTION COMICS, someone named Leviathan has single-handedly destroyed all of the secret organizations that make up the backbone of the DC Universe—A.R.G.U.S., the DEO and Spyril. Everything is in chaos and nobody knows who has done this or how they have accumulated the power and resources to accomplish it.

Now, the greatest detectives in the world, including Batman, the Question, Green Arrow, Plastic Man and Lois Lane must come together to solve the mystery of who Leviathan is.

Major organizations and tentpoles of society have fallen and if these heroes can't figure out who did it and why there may not be a tomorrow that resembles the world they have today.

What's it like working with Alex Maleev again?

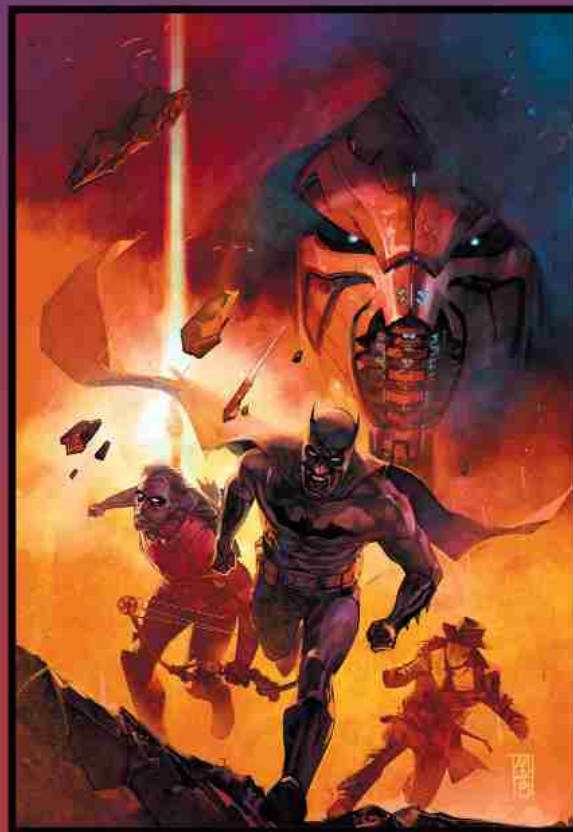
I love collaborating with Alex. We have made our best books together. From his earliest work on *Daredevil* all the way to our run on *SCARLET* for DC this year, Alex just brings out something in me that inspires me. This storyline was created specifically for him based on what I knew he wanted to do in the DC Universe.

How does this tie into the current DC Universe?

When the story line is over, major parts of the DC Universe will not be the same. There will be survivors and they will have a very specific agenda. Very big pieces are being blown up and new big pieces are being put in their place.

Why should fans check this out?

There are a lot of fans who want to hear that something is really going to happen. This is one time it will. This is the rise of a giant new villain/antagonist in the DC Universe. When people find



out who it is and why they are doing what they are doing, they might find themselves deeply challenged.

Leviathan is selling a new world order that is something a lot of people can get behind. It's how this person is doing it that individuals will have a problem with.

What do first-time readers need to know before picking this up?

This is a big mystery thriller. A whodunit! It's a rarity in mainstream comics and that's what we love about it. It's a front row seat to very new things in the DCU.

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The Last Kryptonian-DCP

